

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Community Safety Committee

Via Video Meeting
15:30 on 21 January 2021

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Neil Coleby, Alan Green, Peter Lang (Chair) and Andy Pearce

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

35. Welcome

Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed.

36. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sue Barnard and Paul Page. Cllr Graham Parker had not provided apologies and was absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

37. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Lang declared a pecuniary interest in item 44. If there were any discussions about contracts specifically he would not be able to participate and if that were the case the meeting would not be quorate. There were no updates regarding contracts specifically to be discussed at this meeting.

38. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

The draft minutes were noted.

39. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were none.

40. Appointing the Deputy Chair of the Community Safety Committee

Cllr Pearce nominated Cllr Page, subject to his approval. This nomination was seconded by Cllr Green. There were no other nominations. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

41. Reviewing this Committee's Terms of Reference and quorum

This Committee currently has a quorum of four, in line with most of the other Committees. However some, such as the Climate Emergency Committee, have a quorum of three. The scope of this Committee is not as broad as some of the others, so it was suggested that the quorum of this Committee should be three. The Terms of Reference also state that Committee membership should be no less than seven, but currently it is six. The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee has made a recommendation that this Committee meets every other month, rather than monthly. The Town Council declared a health emergency last year, with several Committees and Sub-Committees now considering how to progress individual aspects of it. It was suggested that as public health is an aspect of community safety, this Committee could oversee these actions in conjunction with officers. Cllr Pearce proposed an amendment to the Community Safety Committee's Terms of Reference that Committee membership be no less than six Councillors, with a quorum of three, and an addition be made to this Committee's responsibilities to progress the Town Council's health emergency declaration; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

42. The Smart Towns presentation

The presentation touched on the installation of the broadband structure, and seemed to

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suggest that although East Suffolk Council is overseeing the implementation, it would be handed over to the Town Council in due course to manage. This Committee would like to understand what the Town Council's legal and financial liabilities would be, particularly regarding maintenance and upgrades. A follow-up presentation has been offered and officers will make arrangements to book this in ahead of a meeting of this Committee.

43. The report from the East Suffolk Community Partnership meeting on 7 December

Cllr Barnard had been appointed as the Town Council's representative but was not present to provide a report so it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. This Committee had enquired about joining East Suffolk Council's Safer Neighbourhoods Committee, but received advice that although that Committee does not exist, the East Suffolk Community Partnership covers matters relating to community safety.

44. Any measures required to improve the safety of the Town Council's assets, including through Police Community Support Officers and extending the provision of CCTV

It is difficult to consider this item at present. The Council may wish to discuss a potential partnership with East Suffolk Council, but East Suffolk Council has not yet released any details about its CCTV service. Without this it is difficult for the Town Council to consider what it may want from a standalone service. The Town Council has a community safety budget, though this is not exclusively for CCTV and could be used to fund a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), though this would need further consideration. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections will be held in May. Additional funding for extra Police officers in Suffolk has been promised. It was suggested that the Town Council should approach the PCC with its views following the elections. The PCC will address the Annual Assembly in March, where there may be an opportunity to enquire about funding and the possibility of sponsoring a PCSO. The Council recently resolved to become a funding partner of Lowestoft Rising and has been offered a seat on its Sponsor Board. The PCC and Police are also funding partners, so this may provide an appropriate platform to raise the matter of security, particularly regarding Town Council assets. Other Committees are exploring potential locations for CCTV cameras. There have been issues with anti-social behaviour at some assets in particular, most recently at Kensington Gardens. Cllr Coleby will send officers details of the next Police Locality Meeting once he gets the details through, to see if anyone would like to attend on behalf of the Town Council.

45. Reviewing the draft Cycling Strategy and any feedback from Councillors, including specific concerns regarding road safety

Cllr Butler had circulated a report regarding road safety for cyclists. Even though the Town Council is not the authority responsible for highways, it could still take on a reporting role and facilitate raising concerns through the online reporting tool, where possible and appropriate. The Highways Technician will be talking to the Planning and Environment Committee soon, where there may be an opportunity to seek his views on the timescales and reporting criteria. It was suggested that the Town Council could keep a log on its website of any issues it has reported, whilst making it clear that the Town Council is not the highways authority. It was suggested that the consideration of the safety of cyclists could extend to pedestrians as well, particularly where there are shared lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. It was suggested these could be more clearly defined, such as by having designated colours.

Cllr Green temporarily left the meeting 16:20

A common strategy across the county would make it easier for people to understand in the future. It was been confirmed that Lowestoft's third river crossing will have cycle lanes on both sides. The Cycle Strategy is still ongoing.

Cllr Green returned 16:23

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It was agreed to carry this item forward to next meeting to see how it is progressing and how the ideas arising from this meeting could be incorporated. These comments will also be fed back to the Climate Emergency Committee, which has also been considering the draft Strategy. Connectivity around the town, and with neighbouring towns, could be improved. As well as raising issues, it was suggested that it would be useful to put forward suggestions as well. Arrangements for highways budgets are changing in May, and it is understood that highways funding allocated to County Councillors will be reduced.

46. Covid-19 recovery and safety measures the Town Council could take to support the community

East Suffolk Council has been co-ordinating numerous local measures. Two large volunteer groups were operating in the town last year but both have wound up. Data has indicated that a high proportion of requests for help were coming from Lowestoft. The town is densely populated but this could also be a reflection of the economic situation. The Deputy Clerk attended the recent Lowestoft Place Board meeting, which Cllr Patience attended as the Town Council's representative. It was reported that the number of calls to the Home But Not Alone service has decreased, but there is still quite a high percentage of requests coming from Lowestoft, although requests are being managed. Officers will place a reminder on the website, Facebook page and in the Lowestoft Journal on how people can access support, and of the Town Council's Covid-19 grant fund. The Town Council previously resolved to set aside a sum of money to work with partners to provide meals to children who would usually receive free school meals. Government funding is now being provided, but the Committee would like some clarity as to what Government relief will be available for Suffolk children during the February half term. If necessary the Council can consider how to provide support, either directly or via other organisations co-ordinating the local effort. The Citizens' Advice Bureau is running the Voice of a Friend initiative. East Suffolk Council's Communities Team has been contacting vulnerable and isolated people and have been providing regular reports. It is recognised that there are a lot of isolated and vulnerable people in the area and this is being tackled via several routes. Tackling social isolation has been one of the priorities of the North Lowestoft Community Partnership and vulnerable people could also be directed to The Suffolk Community Foundation. It was requested that officers clarify what Government support is being offered to local children during the February half term, via organisations who are leading the local efforts. Following on from this, the Council may wish to reconsider whether it would wish to contribute to support efforts for schools within the Town Council's boundaries. Alongside this it was requested that officers find out whether eligible families are still receiving vouchers and/or food deliveries.

47. Date of the next meeting

No date has yet been set for the next meeting. It was requested that officers check Cllr Page's availability for a Wednesday afternoon.

48. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no requests for items to be added to the next agenda.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:44.

49. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed:



Date: 15 June 2021